



Cranefly News

Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme

For Superfamily Tipuloidea & Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 37

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Editor: John Kramer



Male genitalia of *Dicranomyia radegasti* Photo. JK

Good News !! British Craneflies by Alan Stubbs, was published on 26th July and copies are now available from the British Entomological and Natural History Society or from Pemberley Books (www.pemberleybooks.com). A discount is available for Dipterist Forum members. Check the BENHS website (www.benhs.org.uk) for details.

This well-illustrated book will be a tremendous help to all naturalists who wish to study craneflies and of great interest to those who already are.

In 1901 George Verrall published British Flies. Vol. VIII. Platypetidae, Pipunculidae and Syrphidae of Great Britain and thus started the ball rolling. In 1909 Vol V of the 'British Flies' series, 'Stratiomyidae and succeeding families' was published, also by Verrall. In the 1880's Verrall turned his attention to the Tipulidae and in 1886-8 published a 'List of British Tipulidae, etc. ('Daddy-longlegs') with notes' in the Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, spread over a few issues. The 'Tipulidae etc.' covered what is called the Tipuloidea today and the 'etc' included Dixidae, Ptychopteridae and Trichoceridae. The notes included keys to genera and species and so the first steps towards a book on British Craneflies was begun. I guess that this was to be 'British Flies. Vol. I' on Verrall's master plan.

Alan Stubbs has continued Verrall's work, publishing first, British Hoverflies (Alan Stubbs and Steven Falk), then British Soldierflies and their Allies, (Alan Stubbs and Martin Drake) and now the first book on British Craneflies. The book has had an unusually long gestation period and the groundwork was laid down in 2005. The Cranefly Recording Scheme began as an idea 50 years ago, and was launched in April 1972 when the first Newsletter was sent out by Alan. British Craneflies will serve as a fitting celebration of that fiftieth anniversary ! Congratulations to Alan and thanks to Roger Hawkins at BENHS for his hard work editing and desk-top publishing.

***Dicranomyia radegasti* Starý 1993 newly recorded in Britain - John Kramer**

This species was taken at Glen Nant NNR, Taynuilt (NR7283), Argyll & Bute, Scotland, by the Norwegian entomologist Kjell Magne Olsen on 30 May 2018, and although it has been recorded regularly in Norway, this record is a first for Britain (Kolscár et al 2021). *Dicranomyia radegasti* belongs to a cluster of species which are difficult to distinguish in the field and close examination is necessary for accurate identification. In his description of *D. chorea* in 1886, Verrall refers to his puzzlement with this group and says 'I hope, that by further examination of the male genitalia in a living state, to come to more definite conclusions'. Work has continued on the taxonomy of these yellow *Dicranomyia*. In 1993 Jaroslav Starý named *D. radegasti*, and the most recent paper sorts out those species in the *D. mitis* aggregate. (Starý and Stubbs 2015).

The identification of *Dicranomyia radegasti*.

Like all *Dicranomyia*, Sc2 is strongly retracted and the hypopygium has a distinct swollen outer dististyle (ventral gonostylus) with a 'beak' (rostrum) and a pair of black bristles (rostral spines).

From its yellow/brown body *Dicranomyia radegastri* is something that we might identify in the net as *D. chorea*, *D. modesta*, or one of the *D. mitis* group such as *D. lutea*, or *D. imbecila*, so what are the differences ?

The wings of *D. radegastri* are clear whereas typical specimens of *D. chorea* have more or less dark wing markings, ie a dark stigma and infuscation of the cross-veins, (Fig. 5) which make them identifiable in the hand. In addition, the inflated inner gonostyle of *chorea*, visible with a hand-lens (Fig 3) is less elongated and more spherical than specimens in the *mitis* group. If in doubt, where markings are pale, a binocular microscope must be used.



Fig 1. *D. radegasti*. Male hypopygium

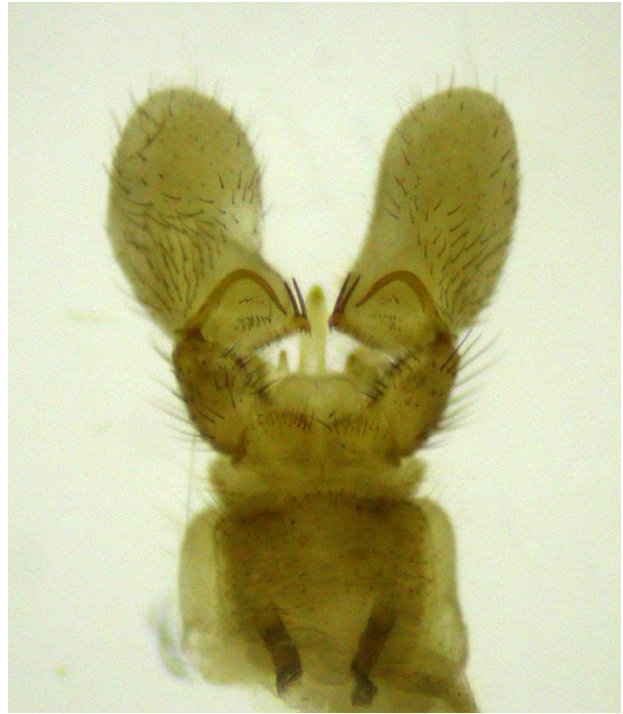


Fig 2. *D. mitis*. Male hypopygium



Fig 3. *D. chorea*. Male hypopygium



Fig 4. *D. radegasti*. Antennal segments.

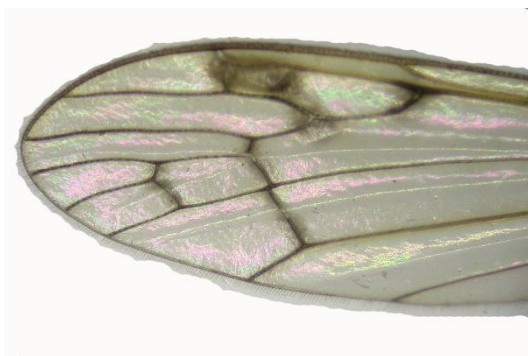


Fig 5. *D. chorea*. Typical wing.



Fig 6. *D. radegasti*. Tarsomeres 4 & 5.

Confusion may occur with some species of yellow-bodied craneflies in this *D. mitis* group. Here again wing markings are helpful. In contrast to the clear wings of *D. radegasti*, three species in this group have a dark stigma spot, which leaves *D. lutea*, and *D. imbecilla* where markings are pale or absent.

Having sorted your yellow-bodied clear-winged *Dicranomyia*, this is where we need to use higher magnification. *D. modesta* has a very distinct dense mat of fine black bristles on the inner surface of the elongated swollen style. Members of the *mitis* group typically have, like *D. radegasti*, a more elongated outer inflated dististyle with the rostrum bearing two spines. In the *mitis* group (Fig. 2) these spines are yellow and longer, and in *radegasti* (Fig. 1) they are black, significantly shorter relative to the inflated dististyle. Fig. 1 shows clearly the alignment of the spines that are similar in length to the rostral spines of *D. chorea* (Fig 3). In other respects *radegasti* is similar to *imbecilla*. Both have claws with a single tooth and both have tarsomere 4 larger than tarsomere 5. In *D. lutea* the two last male tarsomeres are sub-equal in length and tarsal claws are short, with only one tooth (Fig 6) (Stary 1993)

Key [British Craneflies, p151-159.]

Genus *Dicranomyia*.

Following the key in 'British Craneflies' (Stubbs 2021) we are led to *Dicranomyia* Group 4 (p158). This contains those yellow specimens of *Dicranomyia* with clear wings, a closed discal cell and more compact distal flagellar segments (Fig 4). In contrast to *D. chorea*, the femora of *D. radegasti* have pale apices, and for males, we are led to couplet 5. This takes us into the *D. mitis* aggregate. The characteristic dark short rostral spines identify *D. radegasti*.

Summary of Diagnostic characters

Wings clear, dark rostral spines short and aligned as Fig 1 above. Tarsal segments 4 & 5 of unequal length, as in fig 6.

Ecology

D. radegastri is named after Radegast, a God of a mountain range in Moravia where it was first found flying along a steep brook bordered by beech and spruce forest. There are a number of records from Norway. In Glen Nant NNR (NN0127), Argyll and Bute, a male *Dicranomyia radegasti* was recorded by Kjell Magne Olsen together with *Tasiocera fuscescens*, and *Dicranomyia quadra*.

Conclusions

This species has not been on the radar of British dipterists and we must thank Kjell Magne Olsen for bringing it to our attention. It is probable that specimens will be found in many collections, especially in Scotland, when they are searched. Also when visiting hilly or mountainous regions yellow-bodied *Dicranomyia* should be retained and examined closely.

Thanks to Kjell Magne Olsen for sending the author a specimen of *D. radegasti* from Glen Nant NNR.

References

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- Starý, J. (1993) Two new European species of *Dicranomyia* Stephens, 1829, related to *D. (s. str.) chorea* (Meigen, 1818) (Diptera, Limoniidae). Bulletin Zoölogisch Museum, Universiteit van Amsterdam, **13**: 175–182.
- Starý, J., & Stubbs, A.E. 2015. Five species under *Dicranomyia* (*Dicranomyia*) *mitis* (Meigen 1830) (Diptera, Limoniidae). Zootaxa **3964**: 321-334
- Stubbs, A.E. 2021 British Craneflies. British Entomological and Natural History Society.

John Kramer

Down to earth - swarming in *Tasiocera* craneflies - Geoff Hancock

A few years ago I was lucky enough to see an interesting bit of behaviour of *Tasiocera murina* (Meigen). I have no idea if it has been observed before and at the time did nothing about it except make a brief entry in my field notebook. I watched a swarm of several dozen individuals, the species identity of which was made from a small (all-male) sample. I was collecting along the rocky grassland at Bennane Head, near Girvan, South Ayrshire (NX08-06-), 24 May 1986. This event was a substitute for a boat trip to Ailsa Craig cancelled on the day due to sea conditions being unsuitable for landing, a fairly common and frustrating experience.

The nature of the steeply sloping ground brought my eyes almost level with some tussocky clumps of grass. Otherwise, whereas I might have got them in swept samples, it would not have been possible to observe them swarming. They were doing so in the space between over-arching grass stems close to the ground and accomplishing it within a vertical space of about 40cms. The genus *Tasiocera* includes the smallest of all craneflies, with a wing length of about 2.5mm, and I surmised that being so tiny they behaved this way to be sheltered from the on-shore coastal breeze in such an exposed situation. Whether or not this is a common phenomenon under these conditions is not possible to say. Having become aware of this behaviour I have made a point of looking under similar circumstances but never witnessed it again.

Unidentified *Gonomyia* - now resolved - Geoff Hancock

A damaged specimen of *Gonomyia* defied identification from then available resources and it had been suggested that it may represent an unknown species. Following the appearance of two images in *Crane-fly Newsletter* No 35 (Spring 2020) an email was received from Kjell Magne Olsen who sent a series of excellent photographs of the genitalia of *Gonomyia dentata* from a variety of angles. We agree with his suggestion that the specimen, collected at Loch Ailort back in July 1992 is in fact that species. We thank him for taking the time to compare the remains of this insect with Norwegian examples.

E.G. Hancock, Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow.

***Ctenophora (Cnemoncosis) ornata* from South Wiltshire - Pete Boardman & Graham Owens**



GO, a long-standing moth trapper, alerted PB to a couple of specimens of the spectacular Smudge-winged Comb-horn cranefly *Ctenophora ornata* at a moth trap located on a private site near Normansland, Wiltshire, north of the New Forest (approx. SU2317) on the 19/07/21. *C. ornata* is only known from a small number of old growth woodlands with veteran beech trees including the New Forest, Windsor Great Park, and Sherwood Forest, and though these specimens are not far from the New Forest cluster of known records, they are from a new location and new to VC8 South Wiltshire. In recent years moth trap records of this species have been in the majority. The authors would like to acknowledge the landowner for permission to set light traps.

There was no Crane-fly News in the Bulletin 90, Autumn 2020 so the items below were somewhat lost in the text of the Bulletin (p6), and are therefore repeated here.

Corrigendum - John Kramer

There are two ID errors in my paper, Crane-flies of the Ravin de Valbois, France. (DD. 2019 26, 83-95). *Tipula (Pterelachisus) bilobata* is in fact the close relative, *Tipula (Pterelachisus) mayerduerii* Egger, which differs in the shape of the inner clasper is longer. Thanks to Rainer Heiss who first let me know about this. The correction will be published in the Bulletin de la société neuchâteloise des sciences naturelles.

The second error was the wrong identification of *Discobola annulata* from a Malaise trap sample as *D. caesarea*. When I floated out the crumpled wing the error was clear.

***Rhipidia uniseriata* in Northants - John Showers**

During the recent lock-down I started to work through several pots of flies stored in alcohol. These were part of a by-catch from saproxylic beetle monitoring in 2018 at Yardley Chase, Northants. Much of the material was in poor condition and I could not identify it reliably. Most of the remaining material consisted of common species but I did find a female *Rhipidia uniseriata*. This had been taken in a flight interception trap set in a decaying oak or ash tree in a former deer park. Unfortunately all the material that had been collected from several traps in the area was stored in one pot so exactly in which tree the crane-fly had been caught could not be determined. This is the first record of this species in Northants. The attached photos show the habitus and wing markings.

The Next copy deadline for Issue 38 is on Dec 31st 2021.